



Biography of Senator Tom Carper of Delaware

Tom Carper became Delaware's junior Senator on January 3, 2001, after serving two terms as the state's Governor, five terms as its Congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives and six years as State Treasurer. With his election to the U.S. Senate, he has been elected to statewide office a record 11 times.

During his more than 25 years of public service, Tom Carper has sought to build consensus and work across party lines to find practical solutions to real problems. The Washington Post's David Broder calls Tom Carper "a notably effective and nonpartisan leader, admired and trusted on both sides of the aisle."

At the start of the 108th Congress, Senator Carper became a member of the Senate Democratic Leadership. As a member of the four person "Executive Committee" Carper has emerged as a leading moderate voice in his party, advising the Leader and helping to devise, coordinate and implement strategy for the Democratic caucus.

Promising to "make Delaware a model for the nation," Sen. Carper is building upon successes in the First State to help raise student achievement, protect national passenger rail service, continue to reform the nation's welfare system, implement a national energy policy, promote affordable housing, and return a sense of fiscal responsibility to the budget process. In light of his focus on finding out what works, the centrist Democratic Leadership Council recently named Carper its "Chairman for New Democrat Best Practices."

The first bill he sponsored as a Senator, the "Empowering Parents Act," was passed by both houses of Congress and signed into law by President Bush as part of the Leave No Child Behind Act of 2001. The President also signed into law Sen. Carper's effort with John Corzine of New Jersey to address the growing need for affordable housing for working families.

To build on the great success of welfare reform, Tom Carper joined in the spring of 2002 with former fellow Governor and current Senator Evan Bayh of Indiana in coauthoring the "Work and Family Act." The measure puts work first, strengthens families, equips people with the tools to achieve self-sufficiency and gives states the resources and flexibility to meet more rigorous work requirements in coming years.

Sen. Carper enjoys close working relationships with a dozen former governors now serving in the Senate or as members of the Bush Administration. Together they work toward the kind of consensus building that is the hallmark of Tom Carper's career in public service.

Tom Carper joins his colleagues on the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, the Environment & Public Works Committee and the Government Affairs Committee, as well as the Special Committee on Aging. He is the Ranking Democrat on the EPW's Clean Air Subcommittee.

An Active Leader who Understands and Delivers for Delaware's Families

Elected Governor of Delaware in 1992 and again 1996, Tom Carper led efforts to cut income taxes by nearly 50 percent for middle-class families; established nationally recognized standards-based education reform; and helped to create a prescription drug benefit for seniors in need. He also balanced the state budget eight years in a row, created record levels of jobs, and dramatically reduced the growth of state debt, earning Delaware its first-ever "AAA" credit rating. To help working families, Governor Carper joined with the General Assembly in eliminating the marriage penalty and estate tax, cutting the public utility tax, and eliminating the gross receipts tax for many small businesses.

As Governor, Tom Carper gained nationwide attention for achieving real education reform. Delaware led the country in creating rigorous public education standards; instituting optional parent training programs; fully funding Head Start and other early intervention projects; demanding accountability from students, parents and teachers; and ending social promotion. Since instituting those reforms, students have continued to demonstrate across-the-board improvements in math and reading.

In July of 1998, Tom Carper was selected by his colleagues to serve as Chairman of the National Governors' Association (NGA). During his chairmanship, he focused on raising student achievement nationwide by promoting education accountability, expanding learning opportunities for all children, and harnessing technology for student growth. Shortly before becoming chairman, Governor Carper served as the lead Democratic governor within the NGA on welfare reform in a successful effort to develop the unanimous endorsement of all governors for policies that provided the foundation on which the 1996 federal welfare reform law was based.

Leader in Congress

Before being elected Governor, Tom Carper was elected to and served five terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. As a congressman, he chaired the House Subcommittee on Economic Stabilization and was a member of the Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Committee and the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. Congressman Carper used his leadership to focus on an agenda of fiscal responsibility that encouraged economic growth and protected for the health and safety of Delaware's families.

Life of Public Service

Tom Carper fell in love with Delaware's beauty the first time he saw it from the window of a military transport aircraft during his early years of active duty service as a naval flight officer. After completing his military service, he earned an MBA and then worked in Delaware's economic development office from 1975 to 1976. He was elected at age 29 to the first of three consecutive terms as State Treasurer.

As Treasurer, Tom Carper began his solid record of financial responsibility. He developed Delaware's first cash management system and played a key role in improving the state's credit rating from worst in the nation to a respectable "AA" rating.

Senator Carper is also a former member of the nation's nine-member Amtrak Board of Directors. He currently serves as chairman of the executive committee of the board of Jobs for America's Graduates and was chairman of the National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices from 2000-01. While governor, Tom Carper served as Vice-Chair for the American Legacy Foundation Board of Directors.

Caring Father and Husband

Born in Beckley, West Virginia on January 23, 1947, Tom Carper grew up in Danville, Virginia. He attended Ohio State University as a Navy ROTC midshipman, graduating in 1968 with a bachelor's degree in economics. He completed five years of service as a Naval flight officer, serving in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. He went on to serve another 18 years in the Naval Reserve and retired with the rank of Captain. Tom Carper moved to Delaware in 1973, where he earned an MBA at the University of Delaware.

He is married to the former Martha Ann Stacy. They reside in Wilmington, Delaware with their two sons Ben and Christopher who are 13 and 15 years old.